

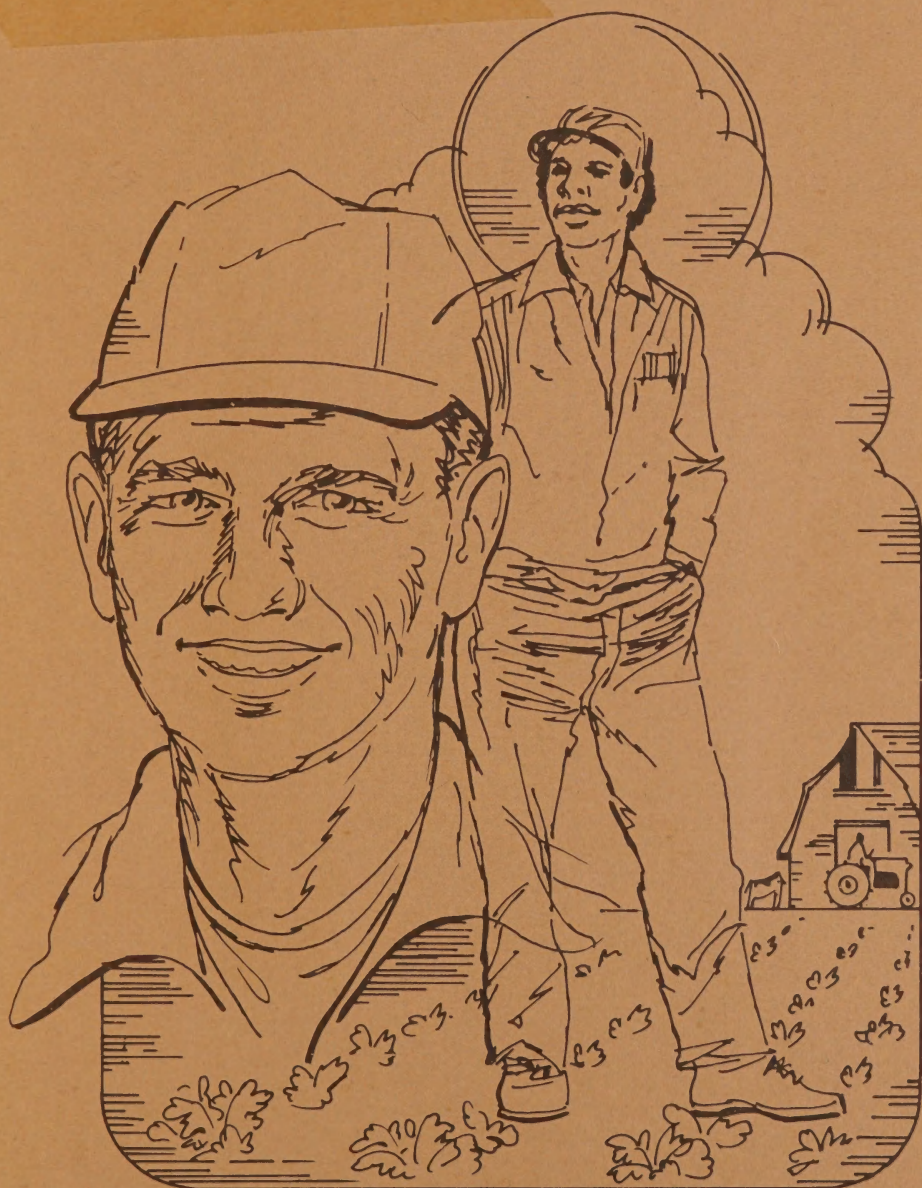
Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Reserve States
.aHD1761 ment of
.H36 ture
v. 13 of
cy and
se

Handbook for Small or Limited Resource Farmers

South Carolina



AD-33 Bookplate
(1-68)

NATIONAL

**A
G
R
I
C
U
L
T
U
R
A
L**



LIBRARY

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Advocacy and
Enterprise

Handbook for Small or Limited Resource Farmers

South Carolina

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

JUL 20 1993

CATALOGING = PREP.

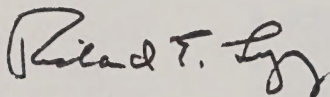
Message from the Secretary

It is a pleasure to present this *Handbook for Small or Limited Resource Farmers*, a directory of public and private agencies which offer program services to the agricultural and rural communities of America.

Some farmers and some rural communities fail to utilize programs for which they are eligible simply because they don't know what the programs are or where they are. We are issuing this publication in our continuing effort to make agricultural programs more accessible to all Americans.

We believe this handbook will serve farmers, rural communities, agricultural organizations, and the general public as a useful guide through the labyrinth of public and private agencies charged to deliver agricultural and rural services to our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard E. Lyng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent and the last name "Lyng" following in a similar style.

Richard E. Lyng
Secretary

Published by the
Office of Advocacy and Enterprise
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Samuel J. Cornelius
Director

Edited by

Yvonne Blanchard Freeman, Ed. D.
Chief
Limited Resource Farmer Initiative

Prepared by
Shirlene Mattison and Vivian Moore
Equal Opportunity Staff
Office of Advocacy and Enterprise

August 1987

This *Handbook for Small or Limited Resource Farmers* is a directory of rural and agricultural programs in 17 southern and border states where most U.S. farms are located. It is being issued in an effort to broaden access to agricultural programs and rural resources, particularly among farm operators and owners whose resources are substantially limited.

The needs of farmers with limited resources are of great concern to the Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). One of the most important functions of that office is to provide overall leadership to USDA agencies and affiliates to assure that all Americans have equal access to the programs and opportunities sponsored by the Department of Agriculture.

We would especially appreciate your suggestions on how future directories might better serve farmers and other rural community residents. Please address your comments as follows:

Limited Resource Farmer Initiative
Office of Advocacy and Enterprise
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

We hope this publication proves a useful tool for locating agricultural programs and rural resources.

Acknowledgements

This handbook was developed and prepared by virtue of the cooperation and generous assistance of private and public agency personnel throughout the country.

Of the many service organizations in the private sector, we are particularly indebted to the American Agricultural Movement, the American Bar Association, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, the Legal Services Administration, The National Association of Community Health Centers, the National Clearinghouse for Primary Care Information, and the National Farmers Union.

During the development and preparation of this publication, the agricultural entities of the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities upheld their reputation as a national resource by providing valuable information and suggestions.

Of public sector organizations, we are most grateful to the National Institutes of Health and many state agencies, particularly the Departments of Agriculture and Departments of Economic Development.

Finally, we thank our colleagues in the Department of Agriculture who serve in the Agricultural Cooperative Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Cooperative State Research Service, the Extension Service, the Farmers Home Administration, the Food and Nutrition Service, and the Soil Conservation Service for providing the bulk of the data from which this directory was compiled.

Contents

South Carolina

Federal Agencies	8
Agricultural Experiment Station	8
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	8
Farmers Home Administration	8
State Office	8
District Offices	8
Food and Nutrition Service	8
Regional Office	8
Field Offices	8
Food Stamp Program Cooperating Agencies	8
Soil Conservation Service	9
State Agencies	10
University Programs	11
Community Legal Services	12
Rural Health Services	13
Farm Advocacy Organizations	15
State Bar Association	16
Rural Resource Organizations	17
Articles	
Agricultural Cooperative Service Role In Assisting Rural People	20
<i>by Jack H. Armstrong</i> <i>Deputy Administrator</i> <i>Agricultural Cooperative Service</i>	
USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Procedures	22
Conservation in the 1985 Farm Bill	24
Wills and the Survival of Family Farms	26
<i>by Edward J. Pennick</i> <i>Executive Director</i> <i>Land Assistance Fund, Federation</i> <i>of Southern Cooperatives</i>	

Federal Agencies

Agricultural Experiment Station

Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29631
803/656-3140

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Room 909, Strom Thurmond
Federal Bldg.
1835 Assembly St.
Columbia, SC 29201-2488
803/765-5186

Farmers Home Administration

Strom Thurmond Federal Bldg
1835 Assembly St.
Room 1007
Columbia, SC 29201
803/765-5163

Administrative Office
803/765-5545

Community & Business
Programs
803/765-5573

Farmer Programs
803/765-5877

Rural Housing
803/765-5879

District Offices:

I Bankers Trust Plaza
7 N. Laurens St.
P.O. Box 10007
Federal Station
Greenville, SC 29603
803/242-5684

II 1111 Broad St.
P.O. Drawer 1259
Camden, SC 29020
803/425-1117

III McMillan Federal Bldg.
Room 235
401 W. Evans St.
P.O. Drawer 2468
Florence, SC 29503
803/662-1416

IV Highway 78 West
St. George Plaza
P.O. Box 644
St. George, SC 29477
803/563-3041

V Federal Building
211 York St., N.E.
P.O. Drawer 2477
Aiken, SC 29802
803/648-2396

Food and Nutrition Service

Southeast Regional Office
1100 Spring St., N.W., Rm 200
Atlanta, GA 30367
404/347-4131

Field Offices:

Mart Office Building
800 Briar Creek Rd.,
Rooms DD517-519
Charlotte, NC 28205
704/371-6252

Strom Thurmond Federal
Building, Room 813
1835 Assembly St.
Columbia, SC 29201
803/765-5717

Food Stamp Program Cooperating Agencies:

State Department of
Social Services
1535 Confederate Ave.
Columbia, SC 29202-9988
803/758-3244

Soil Conservation Service

Strom Thurmond Federal Building

Room 950

1835 Assembly St.

Columbia, SC 29201

803/765-5681

State Agencies

Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 11280

Columbia, SC 20211

803/734-2210

University Programs

School of Agriculture

Clemson University
101 Barre Hall
Clemson, SC 29634
803/656-3015

Cooperative Extension Service

Clemson University
103 Barre Hall
Clemson, SC 29634
803/656-3382

1890 Extension Program

South Carolina State College
P.O. Box 1765
Orangeburg, SC 29117
803/534-6916

Community Legal Services

Neighborhood Legal Assistance Program, Inc.

438 King St.
Charleston, SC 29403
803/722-0107

Carolina Regional Legal Services Corporation

279 W. Evans St.
P.O. Box 479
Florence, SC 29503
803/667-1896

Piedmont Legal Services, Inc.

148 East Main St.
Spartanburg, SC 29301
803/582-0369

Palmetto Legal Services

1316 Main St.
P.O. Box 2267
Columbia, SC 29202
803/799-9668

Legal Services Agency of Western Carolina, Inc.

One Pendleton St.
Greenville, SC 29603
803/233-4108

Legal Services of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, Inc.

404 South Fourth St.
P.O. Box 1200
Hartsville, SC 29550
803/332-1162

Rural Health Services

Calhoun Falls Area Medical Services, Inc.

535 Jackson St.
Calhoun Falls, SC 29628
803/447-8578

Cross Health Center

c/o Franklin C. Fetter
Community Health Center
51 Nassau St.
Charleston, SC 29403
803/722-4112

Satellites:

Johns Island Center
c/o Franklin C. Fetter CHC
51 Nassau St.
Charleston, SC 29403

Esau Jenkin Center
c/o Franklin C. Fetter
Community Health Center
51 Nassau St.
Charleston, SC 29403

Rural Health Services, Inc.

P.O. Box 277
Clearwater, SC 29822
803/593-9283

South Horry County Medical Center

P.O. Box 2100
Conway, SC 28577
803/347-7247

Midlands Primary Health Care, Inc.

P.O. Box 248
Eastover, SC 29044
803/353-8741

Satellites:

Fair-Winn Health Care Center
321 Bypass
P.O. Box 326
Winnsboro, SC 29081

Allendale County Rural Health Program

P.O. Box 36
Fairfax, SC 29827
803/632-2533

Greeleyville Medical Center, Inc.

201 South Main St.
Greeleyville, SC 29056
803/426-2180

Community Medical Center

Route 2, Box 2450
Gresham, SC 29546
803/362-2222

Little River Medical Center

P.O. Box 527
Little River, SC 29566
803/249-3424

Sandhills Medical Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 366
McBee, SC 29101
803/335-8291

Satellites:

Sandhills Medical Foundation
P.O. Box 126
Bethune, SC 29009

Sandhills Medical Foundation
Jefferson, SC 29718

St. James-Santee Rural Health Program, Inc.

P.O. Box 313
McClellanville, SC 29458
803/887-3274

Olanda Medical Center, Inc.

P.O. Box 488
Olanda, SC 29114
803/396-4619

Family Health Centers, Inc.

P.O. Box 1125
College Station
Orangeburg, SC 29115
803/536-3266

Satellites:

Family Health Centers, Inc.
2310 Magnolia, N.E.
Orangeburg, SC 29115

Family Health Centers, Inc.
U.S. 601 North
St. Matthews, SC 29135

Family Health Centers, Inc.
Highway 4
Springfield, SC 29146

Springfield
P.O. Box 58
Springfield, SC 29115

Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive Health Services

P.O. Box 357
Ridgeland, SC 29936
803/726-8171

Satellites:

St. Helena Clinic
P.O. Box A
Frogmore, SC 29920

Hardeeville Clinic
P.O. Box 387
Ridgeland, SC 29927

Sheldon Clinic
P.O. Box 8
Ridgeland, SC 29940

Pee Dee Health Care Consortia, Inc.

P.O.Box 239
Society Hill, SC 29593
803/378-4501

Satellites:

Lee Medical Practice
P.O. Box 508
Bishopville, SC 29010

Clio Medical Center
P.O. Box 278
Clio, SC 29525

McColl Medical Center
225 South Main St.
McColl, SC 29570

MEGALS Rural Health Association

P.O. Box 219
Trenton, SC 29847
803/275-3218

Satellites:

MEGALS Dental Practice
Center
P.O. Box 638
McCormick, SC 29835

MEGALS Family Practice
Center
P.O. Box 899
McCormick, SC 29835

MEGALS Family Practice
Center
Main St.
Ridge Spring, SC 29129

MEGALS Family Practice
Center
P.O. Box 275
Saluda, SC 29138

MEGALS Family Practice
Center
85 South Greenwood Ave.
Ware Shoals, SC 29692

Farm Advocacy Organizations

South Carolina American Agriculture Movement, Inc.

Box 506
Bishopville, SC 29010
803/484-5727

Federation of Southern Cooperatives

Affiliates:

Bluffton Oyster Cooperative

P.O. Box 44
Bluffton, SC 29910

Heath Springs Farmers Co-op

Route 2, Box 72
Heath Springs, SC 29058

Hilton Head Fishing Co-op

Hilton Head, SC 29928

Ridgeland Co-op Daycare Center

P.O. Box 483
Bluffton, SC 29910

South Carolina Sea Island Farmers' Cooperative

Route 1, Box 226-D
Ravenel, SC 29470

Santee Production and Marketing Cooperative

P.O. Box 572
Kingstree, SC 39556

Sea Island Federal Credit Union

P.O. Box 143
Frogmore, SC 29920

South Carolina Association of Cooperatives

304 Creek Drive
Quinby, SC 29501

State Bar Association

South Carolina State Bar Assn

Lawyer Referral Service

1321 Bull St.

P.O. Box 11039

Columbia, SC 29201

1-800-922-1583

803/799-7100

Rural Resource Organizations (National and Regional Offices)

Agricultural Council of America
1250 Eye St., N.W.
Suite 601
Wash., DC 20005
202/682-9200

**American Agriculture
Movement, Inc.**
100 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Suite 500, Box 69
Wash., DC 20002
202/544-5750

**American Farm Bureau
Federation**
600 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Wash., DC 20004
202/484-2222

American Land Resource Assn
P.O. Box 33488
Wash., DC 20033
202/331-0637

Center for Community Change
1000 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
Wash., DC 20007
202/342-0519

Environmental Policy Institute
Agriculture Resources Project
218 D St., S.E.
Wash., DC 20003
202/544-2600

**Federation of Southern
Cooperatives/Land Assistance
Fund**
100 Edgewood Ave., N.E.
Suite 1228
Atlanta, GA 30303
404/524-6882

**Housing Assistance Council,
Inc.**
1025 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Suite 606
Wash., DC 20005
202/842-8600

Southeast Regional Office
1365 Peach St., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30309
404/892-4824

League of Rural Voters
100 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Suite 500A, Box 69
Wash., DC 20002
202/554-7456

Legal Services Corp.
Office of Field Services
400 Virginia Ave., S.W.
Wash., DC 20024-2751
202/863-1820

**National Association for
the Southern Rural Poor**
248A G St., S.W.
Wash., DC 20024
202/554-3265

North Carolina Office
337 West Main St.
Suite 203
Durham, NC 27701
919/683-2151

**National Association of
Community Health Centers**
1625 I St., N.W.
Suite 420
Wash., DC 20006
202/833-9280

**National Association of
Towns and Townships**
1522 K St., N.W.
Suite 730
Wash., DC 20005
202/737-5200

**National Center for
Neighborhood Enterprise**

1367 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Wash., DC 20036
202/331-1103

Affiliate:

National Council for a Black
Economic Agenda
1367 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Wash., DC 20036
202/331-1103

**National Clearinghouse for
Primary Care Information**

8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 600
McLean, VA 22102
703/821-8955

**National Council of
Agricultural Employees**

499 S. Capitol St., S.W.
Suite 411
Wash., DC 20003
202/488-1100

**National Council of
Farmer Cooperatives**

1800 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Wash., DC 20036
202/659-1525

National Farmers Union

Denver Headquarters Office
10065 Harvard Ave.
Denver, CO 80251
303/337-5500

Washington, DC Office
600 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Suite 202W
Wash., DC 20024
202/554-1600

St. Paul Field Office
317 York Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55101
612/771-3380

**National Future Farmers
of America**

5632 Mt. Vernon
Memorial Highway
P.O. Box 15160
Alexandria, VA 22309
703/360-3600

National Grange

1616 H St., N.W.
Wash., DC 20006
202/628-3507

National Rainbow Coalition

2100 M St., N.W.
Suite 609
Wash., DC 20037
202/955-5795

**National Rural Development
and Finance Corp.**

1718 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 400
Wash., DC 20009
202/797-8820

**National Rural Electric
Cooperative Association**

1800 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Wash., DC 20036
202/857-9500

National Rural Housing Coalition

1016 - 16th St., N.W.
8th Floor
Wash., DC 20036
202/775-0046

National Rural Water Association

Box 1604
Duncan, OK 73533
405/672-8925

Washington, DC Office
1776 K St., N.W.
Wash., DC 20006
202/833-9481

**National Save the Family
Farm Coalition**

80 F St., N.W.
Suite 714
Wash., DC 20001
202/737-2215

**National Sharecroppers Fund/
Rural Advancement Fund**

2124 Commonwealth Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28205
704/334-3051

**North Carolina Council
of Churches**

Bryan Building
201 A - Cameron Village
Raleigh, NC 27605-1377
919/828-6501
919/828-6542

Rural America, Inc.

1312 - 18th St., N.W.
4th Floor
Wash., DC 20036
202/659-2800

Rural Coalition

2001 S St., N.W.
Suite 500
Wash., DC 20009
202/483-1500

Southern Poverty Law Center

P.O. Box 548
Montgomery, AL 36101
205/264-0286

**Winrock International
Institute for Agricultural
Development**

Petit Jean Mountain
Route 3
Morrilton, AR 72110
501/727-5435

Agricultural Cooperative Service Role in Assisting Rural People

The Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 formalized assistance to agricultural cooperatives in the U.S. Department of Agriculture by establishing a division of cooperative marketing. The Agricultural Cooperative Service (ACS) is the Department's focal point for conducting cooperative research and policy analysis and providing technical assistance to cooperatives and producers interested in organizing cooperatives.

The Agency has five missions.

1. Conduct research and analysis on all phases of cooperatives.
2. Conduct studies of operations of individual cooperatives upon their request.
3. Assist groups of producers who desire to form a cooperative (cooperative development).
4. Acquire, analyze, and disseminate economic, statistical, and historical information on cooperatives.
5. Promote the knowledge of cooperative principles and practices.

The agency has a total staff of about 70. It has no authority or funds for making grants or loans to cooperatives or groups of producers wishing to form cooperatives.

The agency is organized into an Information and Education staff and three program divisions. The Information and Education Staff handles publishing and other information functions.

The Cooperative Marketing and Purchasing Division is organized on a commodity basis, with specialists in three commodity groups and international trade.

The Cooperative Management Division is organized on a functional basis, with specialists in the areas of cooperative finance, management and operations (including member relations), and policy and legal. The division also has a Statistics and ADP group which conducts an annual survey of farmer cooperatives and publishes an annual cooperative statistics report.

The Cooperative Development Division is the third program division. Its major mission is to provide technical assistance to producer groups interested in forming a cooperative and to assist existing cooperatives still in the developing stages to improve their operations or to analyze the feasibility of new operations or services. The division also provides training to developing cooperative personnel and conducts some research on problems facing developing cooperatives.

The division is organized into two program areas. The Feasibility and Development program is staffed by professionals located in the Washington office. The primary activity of this staff is conducting feasibility studies for groups of producers wishing to form new cooperatives and helping them implement feasible cooperatives.

The Field Operations and Training program is staffed by four professionals, one in Washington and one in each of three field offices located in Greenville, NC; London, KY; and Hilo, HI.

Under the leadership of Washington-based program leaders, training is provided for directors, managers, and other key employees of new and developing cooperatives. This training covers such topics as cooperative principles and practices, directors' role and responsibilities, management, financial management, marketing, and bookkeeping.

In addition to agricultural producers, the Cooperative Development Division provides technical assistance to fishermen, forestland owners, and rural producers of hand crafts. Services can be requested by writing a letter to the Administrator, Agricultural Cooperative Service, USDA, Washington, DC 20250.

USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Procedures

Discrimination is prohibited by regulation in both federally assisted as well as direct assistance programs. Numerous laws, chief among them being Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, and handicap.

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure that no person be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or handicap in any program or activity receiving direct or indirect assistance from the Department. The Office of Advocacy and Enterprise (OAE) has the responsibility to assure that all minority groups have equal access and treatment in relation to program services.

Although the purpose of this directory is to make farmers and rural communities more aware of agricultural programs administered at state and local levels, we find it necessary to outline the procedures for filing a discrimination complaint when unresolvable problems are encountered in the access to USDA programs and services.

Procedures for Filing Discrimination Complaints

1. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is a written or oral statement which alleges discrimination in the administration or operation of program activities, benefits, or services on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, and handicap.

2. Who Can File a Complaint?

Any individual or individuals acting in their own interest or on behalf of any specific classes of persons who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, and handicap may personally, or through a representative, file a complaint.

3. To Whom Should the Complaint Be Addressed?

Individuals who believe themselves to be victims of the kinds of discrimination referred to in this article may file a complaint with the head of any agency, any designated agency official, or the Secretary of Agriculture.

4. What is the Timeframe for Filing a Complaint?

A complaint *must* be filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act, unless the time for filing is extended by the agency head or the Secretary of Agriculture.

5. What Method Should Be Used to File a Complaint?

A complaint can be filed *orally* or in *writing*.

6. What Should a Complaint Contain?

All complaints, where appropriate, should contain the following information:

Name, address and telephone number of complainant;

Name and address of the entity delivering the service or benefits;

Date and place of the alleged discriminatory act and a statement as to whether the action is continuing;

Description of the incident or action which the complainant alleges to be discriminatory;

Type of discrimination; e.g., race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or handicap;

Name, address and title of persons who may have knowledge of the act; and

Any other information which will assist in investigating and resolving the complaint.

Conservation in the 1985 Farm Bill

What the Conservation Provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill Mean to You

Conservation Provisions

Conservation Reserve: The Conservation Reserve offers producers help in retiring highly erodible cropland. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) will share up to half of the cost of establishing permanent grasses, legumes, trees, windbreaks, or wildlife plantings on your highly erodible cropland. Under 10-year contracts, ASCS will make annual rental payments to you as long as the terms and conditions of the contract are met.

Conservation Compliance: Conservation compliance applies if you continue planting annually tilled crops on highly erodible fields. To remain eligible for certain USDA program benefits, you must develop and be actively applying a locally approved conservation plan for those highly erodible fields by January 1, 1990. You must have the plan fully implemented by January 1, 1995.

Sodbuster: Sodbuster applies if you plant annually tilled crops on a highly erodible field that was not used for crop production during the period 1981-85. If you plow out such a highly erodible field, you must do so under a conservation system approved by the local conservation district in order to remain eligible for USDA program benefits.

Swampbuster: Swampbuster applies if you convert naturally occurring wetlands to cropland after December 23, 1985 (the date the farm bill was signed). With some exceptions, to remain eligible for certain USDA farm programs you must discontinue production of annually tilled crops on newly converted wetlands.

Your Options

As an agricultural producer, you may:

- Develop and apply a conservation plan for your highly erodible fields, in cooperation with SCS and the local conservation district. The plan will help you reduce soil loss to levels that are technically and economically achievable. You will retain eligibility for USDA farm program benefits.

- Plant permanent cover on land where annually tilled crops cannot be grown because of excessive erosion. If you choose this option, you may want to consider entering the land into the Conservation Reserve and planting permanent grasses, legumes, trees, windbreaks, or wildlife cover. You still would have other USDA programs open to you.
- Produce crops on a highly erodible field without using a locally approved conservation system, but you would lose eligibility for USDA program benefits.
- Produce crops on newly converted wetlands, but lose eligibility for USDA program benefits.

Obtaining Assistance

For more information about the conservation provisions or for conservation planning assistance, contact the local SCS field office. SCS conservationists can tell you if you have wetlands or highly erodible fields, and they will help you prepare a conservation plan. Local conservation districts approve all plans. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service has information about the effects of various conservation provisions on USDA farm programs. All efforts will be made to help you continue to qualify.

Wills and the Survival of Family Farms

Today's rural crisis and its effect on the family farmer, especially those who are black, make it easy to overlook some basic landowner responsibilities, many of which are essential if the growing tide of black land loss is to be stemmed and eventually reversed. The greatest responsibilities of a black farm landowner are probably to assure that the land he or she owns (1) is legally secure and (2) can be safely passed on upon his or her death to the individual(s) he or she has chosen.

While the current rural crisis is primarily a financial one, it is compounded for black farmers simply because many do not have clear title to their land, a vast amount of which is heir property.

The most common problems with heir property are:

- 1) It is often impossible to borrow money on heir property because there is no clear title, which makes it less attractive as collateral.
- 2) The land is more likely to become a target for speculators who prey on unsuspecting heirs. This process usually results in land loss through what is known as partition sale.

When a person dies without a will, the heirs acquire an interest in the property. There is no ownership of a specific piece of property or land, only an interest in the entire estate. Frequently, several generations of heirs are involved with varying degrees of interest and ideas on how the property should be used and/or divided.

For various reasons, one or more heirs will often convey their interests in the estate to a land speculator. The speculator will then petition the court to have the entire estate (tract of land) sold at public auction. In most cases, the property is sold at a price far below market value.

Because such an auction usually requires ready cash, the property is more often than not purchased by the speculator or someone outside the landowner's family.

The only sure way for a farmer to prevent such a tragedy would be to make a will and update it as circumstances dictate. The land would then go to whomever the landowner desired.

Because of the complexity of additional problems facing black farm landowners, it is imperative that they continue to meet their basic responsibilities even in the face of the current farm crisis. The most important of these responsibilities is to ensure that the land is preserved for future generations.

It would indeed be a tragedy to survive the agricultural crisis only to lose the land for failing to perform the basic responsibilities of landownership. Although the making of a will is a very important responsibility, there are many others. A detailed list can be obtained by contacting the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (FSC/LAF), 100 Edgewood Ave., N.E., Suite 1228, Atlanta, GA, (404)524-6882.

an

